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Alberta Health and Social Services

Disciplines Committee

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1984-85 ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
ALBERTA HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
DISCIPLINES COMMITTEE

Alberta Health & Social Services Disciplines Committee
c/o Alberta Social Services & Community Health
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

		PAGE
I.	INTRODUCTION	1
	A. History of the Committee	1
	B. Mandates of the Committee	1
	C. Membership of the Committee	2
	D. Major Activities of the Committee	3
II.	HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICE MANPOWER PLANNING	4
III.	MANPOWER DATA COLLECTION AND DISSEMINATION	6
	A. Survey of Professional Associations and Registration Boards	6
	B. Survey of Employers of Health and Social Service Personnel	7
	C. Survey of Health and Social Service Training Programs	8
	D. Health and Social Service Manpower Indicators	8
	E. Nursing Manpower Model	8
	F. Publications and Manpower Information Dissemination	9
	G. Information Requests	10
IV.	LIAISON ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMITTEE	11
	Appendix A - Terms of reference of the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee	13
	Appendix B - Membership of the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee	14

I. INTRODUCTION

The present report is the eighth annual report of the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee. It describes the history, functions, structure, and activities of the Committee from April 1, 1984 to March 31, 1985.

A. History of the Committee

In August 1973, a formal coordinating mechanism between the various departments of the provincial government involved in manpower planning for health and social service personnel was established. This interdepartmental coordinating body was called the Alberta Health Manpower Committee. It consisted of senior officials from the Department of Health and Social Development, Department of Labour and Manpower, Department of Advanced Education, and the Alberta Hospitals Services Commission. The Deputy Minister of the Department of Health and Social Development acted as Chairman of the Alberta Health Manpower Committee.

The reorganization of government departments in 1975-76 necessitated the establishment of a new interdepartmental committee. In August 1976, the Ministers of Social Services and Community Health, Advanced Education and Manpower, and Hospitals and Medical Care established the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee. The first meeting of this Committee was held on September 8, 1976.

B. Mandates of the Committee

The Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee was established:

1. To advise the Ministers and Deputy Ministers of the Departments of Advanced Education, Hospitals and Medical Care, Manpower, and Social Services and Community Health on major human service manpower, training, and related issues; and

2. To coordinate the four departments' policy development, planning, research, and data collection activities for health and social service manpower.

The Committee's formal terms of reference appear in Appendix A on page 13.

C. Membership of the Committee

The Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee is made up of senior officials from the Departments of Advanced Education, Hospitals and Medical Care, Manpower, and Social Services and Community Health. The Committee was headed by Mr. Elvin A. Christenson, F.C.A., a non-governmental Chairman appointed by the Ministers of the four departments.

The Committee has an interdepartmental Secretariat to provide research and planning support. It is composed of staff members from the four participating departments. Dr. Raymond Pong from the Department of Social Services and Community Health was the Executive Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. John Lafrance, Assistant Deputy Minister, was appointed by the Deputy Minister of Social Services, Department of Social Services and Community Health, to the Committee to replace Mr. Marcel Arcand who resigned from the Committee in December 1984. Mr. Gordon Armstrong of the Department of Manpower resigned from the Committee upon his retirement in December 1984. Ms. Barbara Leung of the Department of Social Services and Community Health became a member of the Committee's Secretariat in August 1984. A list of the members of the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee and of the Committee's Secretariat appears in Appendix B on page 14.

Government officials knowledgeable in health, social services, education, legislation, and manpower matters were frequently invited to attend meetings as observers in order to assist the Committee in its deliberations on various issues on human service manpower.

D. Major Activities of the Committee

The Committee met eight times during the year to discuss major issues and to make policy recommendations. The Secretariat met about once a month to prepare background documents for the Committee's consideration.

Other major activities of the Committee included the collection of manpower data on health and social service occupations in the province, publication of documents for public release, and providing manpower information to the public upon request. A more detailed description of these activities appears in the following sections.

II. HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICE MANPOWER PLANNING

Manpower planning issues dealt with by the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee were of two main types: macro manpower issues and manpower concerns pertaining to specific health and social service disciplines.

With respect to macro manpower issues, the Committee examined major social, economic, and demographic trends and their implications for health and social service manpower. It paid special attention to changes in government policies, programs, and legislation, as well as developments in other provinces. Their potential impacts on manpower availability, utilization, and training were assessed. In addition, the committee placed high priority on keeping the government, the human service sector, and the education sector informed of major manpower trends with a view to increasing awareness and encouraging related planning activities.

The Committee also made a concerted effort to deal with a number of concerns pertaining to specific health and social service professions and occupations. These issues often called for special and more in-depth analysis. Some of these issues were brought to the attention of the Committee by professional groups, post-secondary educational institutions, and health care and social service organizations. Others were special requests directed to the Committee by Ministers, Deputy Ministers, and other senior government officials.

Some of the major health and social service manpower and related issues discussed and examined by the Committee in 1984/85 were:

- Policy on professional legislation;
- Proposed legislation for a number of health and social service professions and occupations;
- Manpower issues in relation to the hearing impaired;
- Nursing manpower and education;

- Rehabilitation therapy personnel;
- Dental hygiene personnel;
- Speech therapy personnel;
- Manpower issues in relation to footcare;
- Physician manpower;
- Psychiatric manpower;
- Manpower issues in relation to registered nursing assistants;
- Mental deficiency nursing personnel;
- Pharmacy manpower; and
- Health and social service manpower projections.

III. MANPOWER DATA COLLECTION AND DISSEMINATION

Accurate and up-to-date health and social service manpower data are needed to support the research and planning work of the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee. The collection of manpower and related data is also a mandate given to the Committee by the Ministers. Responding to this need, the participating departments undertook a number of major data collection activities under the auspices of the Committee. These included annual surveys of employers of human service personnel, professional associations, registration boards, and human service training programs in post-secondary educational institutions. These surveys were designed to monitor manpower supply and demand situations and changes in manpower trends in the health care and social service sector in the province.

Data collected by the Committee were shared with other government departments and non-government organizations through a series of publications. Information was also made available to the public upon request.

A. Survey of Professional Associations and Registration Boards

Membership and registration data of professional associations and registration boards are an important source of information on manpower supply. A survey of 62 health and social service professional associations and registration boards was undertaken by the Department of Social Services and Community Health on behalf of the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee on December 31, 1984. The survey was conducted by means of a mailed questionnaire. Information was requested from each professional association or registration board surveyed on the number of registered members, the number of persons joining and leaving the profession in the previous year, sources of new members, and the availability of continuing education programs. Excellent cooperation was obtained from all professional associations and registration boards surveyed.

B. Survey of Employers of Health and Social Service Personnel

The Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee began surveying employers of health and social service personnel in Alberta on a regular basis in 1979. The surveys were designed to collect province-wide information on the current number of practicing health and social service personnel and the current vacancy and turnover situations. The main objectives of these surveys were three-fold:

1. To regularly monitor the current supply and demand situations for health and social service personnel in the province;

2. To alert employers, the provincial government, and professional bodies to problems such as manpower shortages, high turnovers of personnel, and geographic maldistribution; and

3. To provide information to enable Alberta to gear its health and social service educational programs to produce an adequate number of personnel with appropriate training.

In previous years, an annual survey of employers had been carried out at the end of September. The Committee decided in 1983 to change the survey date to March 31 in order to coincide with the end of a fiscal year. In order to minimize technical difficulties as a result of the change in the survey date, it was decided that only a partial survey be done in 1984 and that a full-scale survey be resumed in 1985.

A survey of employers was conducted on March 31, 1984 on behalf of the Committee by the Department of Social Services and Community Health with assistance from the Department of Hospitals and Medical Care. Over 1,600 employers of health and social service personnel in the province were contacted. With a response rate of over 97 percent, the survey collected manpower data on 69 health and social service disciplines. Additional information on specialties and educational qualifications was obtained for some occupational groups, such as nursing and social work.

C. Survey of Health and Social Service Training Programs

On behalf of the Committee, the Health and Social Service Programs Branch of the Department of Advanced Education conducted a survey of health and social service training programs in post-secondary educational institutions in Alberta. As training programs are a major source of supply of health and social service personnel, the purpose of this survey is to obtain information on potential manpower supply. The survey was designed to obtain data on the number of applicants, first year enrolment quotas, actual enrolments, and the number of graduates from the training programs.

D. Health and Social Service Manpower Indicators

The Committee introduced in 1982 the use of manpower indicators in an effort to enhance its capability to monitor health and social service manpower trends. Using secondary sources of information, such as administrative data and published statistics, the indicators provide timely indications of changes in the human service labor force. The indicators were intended to supplement the annual surveys conducted by the Committee. Two issues of manpower indicators were published in 1984/85 by the Department of Social Services and Community Health on behalf of the Committee.

E. Nursing Manpower Model

The Health and Social Service Programs Branch of the Department of Advanced Education maintained the Nursing Manpower Model on behalf of the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee. The Nursing Manpower Model is a computer program that can provide nursing manpower projections based on different assumptions and data inputs. Projections from the model were used in a number of studies on nursing manpower issues.

F. Publications and Manpower Information Dissemination

It has been the policy of the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee to share its manpower information with other organizations and the public. To this end, the Committee publishes, on a regular basis, a number of documents that are widely distributed to other government departments, non-governmental agencies, educational institutions, professional associations, and public libraries.

In November 1984, the Committee released the results of its eleventh survey of employers, which was conducted on March 31, 1984. The "Survey of Health and Social Service Personnel Working in Alberta, March 31, 1984," published by the Department of Social Services and Community Health on behalf of the Committee, contained manpower information on the number of full-time equivalent positions in health care and social service institutions and agencies, vacancy rates, and turnover rates for 69 occupations.

A report entitled Health and Social Service Manpower in Alberta, 1983 was published in November 1984 by the Department of Social Services and Community Health on behalf of the Committee. This report, the sixth in a series, provided basic manpower information and statistical data on 35 health and social service occupational groups. The manpower information contained in this publication was obtained from the survey of employers, the survey of professional associations and registration boards, and the survey of health and social service training programs in post-secondary educational institutions.

In December 1984, the Health and Social Service Programs Branch of the Department of Advanced Education published, on behalf of the Committee, a report entitled Alberta Health and Social Service Training Program Inventory, 1983-84. This report contained information on various aspects of human service training programs such as length of programs, number of applicants, enrolment quotas, number of students enrolled, and number of graduates.

G. Information Requests

One of the tasks of the Secretariat of the Committee is to provide health and social service manpower information to the public in order to encourage manpower planning activities and to maximize the use of available data. As awareness of the Committee's work grows, the number of requests for publications and information has steadily increased in recent years. In 1984/85, the Executive Secretary of the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee received many information requests from Alberta government departments, government departments in other provinces, educational institutions, professional associations, health and social service organizations, the media, and members of the public. Requests for information were also made to other members of the Secretariat. In addition, the Executive Secretary was invited to speak to a number of organizations and committees about health and social service manpower planning in Alberta.

IV. LIAISON ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMITTEE

The Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee placed considerable emphasis on maintaining close contacts with other governmental bodies and committees which engaged in manpower planning and related activities. This was to ensure that recommendations made and actions taken by the Committee were consistent with overall government policies. The Executive Secretary of the Alberta Manpower Committee was a member of the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee and played a vital liaison role bridging the two advisory bodies. Similarly, the Registrar of the Health Disciplines Board attended meetings of the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee as an observer. In addition, officials knowledgeable in matters related to health and social service manpower were consulted and were often invited to meetings of the Committee to provide expert advice.

The Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee met with the Social Care Facilities Review Committee and the Northern Alberta Development Council to discuss mutual concerns regarding health and social service manpower problems.

In order to keep abreast of developments and manpower planning activities in other parts of the country, three members of the Committee's Secretariat (Mrs. Vivien Lai, Mr. William Novasky, and Dr. Raymond Pong) maintained close contacts with their counterparts in other provinces and territories through their membership on two interprovincial committees, the Federal-Provincial Advisory Committee on Health Manpower and the Western Canada Post-Secondary Health Manpower Requirements Subcommittee. The former reports to the Conference of Deputy Ministers of Health; the latter is a subcommittee to the Western Canada Post-Secondary Coordination Committee.

Some of the major manpower issues discussed in interprovincial forums in 1984/85 were:

Physician manpower;

- Nursing manpower;
- Health disciplines legislation;
- Allied health intern stipends;
- Immigration and emigration of health and social service personnel;
- Mental health manpower;
- Rehabilitation therapy personnel; and
- Environmental and occupational training for health personnel.

APPENDIX A

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE ALBERTA HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES DISCIPLINES COMMITTEE

1. In conjunction with appropriate agencies, develop on an ongoing basis inventories on:

   i. Health and social services disciplines training programs;

   ii. Health and social services disciplines supply and distribution.

2. Review pertinent studies, data and executive decisions from other jurisdictions on the training and supply of health and social service manpower.

3. Review short and long range plans from appropriate agencies for:

   i. Health and social services disciplines training program;

   ii. Health and social services disciplines supply and distribution.

4. Review alternative requirements to meet the needs for the development of health and social services in the future.

5. Define areas of particular concern in the training and/or supply and/or distribution of health and social services personnel and recommend ways of resolving these concerns.

6. Advise from time to time on request the need for in-depth studies in particular areas of manpower training and supply.

7. Undertake such other related activities as may be required.

8. Submit an annual report on the activities of the Committee.

APPENDIX B

MEMBERSHIP OF THE ALBERTA HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES DISCIPLINES COMMITTEE (as of March 31, 1985)

Members of the Committee

Mr. Elvin A. Christenson, F.C.A., Chairman, Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee

Dr. D. E. Berghofer, Assistant Deputy Minister, Program Services Division, Alberta Advanced Education

Mr. Larry Charach, Director, Division Support Branch, Alberta Social Services and Community Health

Dr. A. V. Follett, Senior Medical Consultant, Alberta Hospitals and Medical Care

Mr. D. J. Junk, Assistant Deputy Minister, Policy Development Division, Alberta Hospitals and Medical Care

Mr. John Lafrance, Assitant Deputy Minister, Policy and Program Development, Alberta Social Services and Community Health

Mr. Don Ogaranko, Director of Planning Services, Planning Secretariat, Alberta Manpower

Members of the Secretariat

Dr. Raymond W. Pong, Executive Secretary, Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee; (Policy and Program Development, Alberta Social Services and Community Health)

Mr. Edward Bruce, Senior Program Consultant, Health and Social Service Programs Branch, Alberta Advanced Education

Ms. Janet Davidson, Manager of Evaluation and Manpower Planning, Research and Strategic Planning Branch, Alberta Hospitals and Medical Care

Mrs. Vivien Lai, Director, Research and Strategic Planning Branch, Alberta Hospitals and Medical Care

Ms. Barbara Leung, Research Officer, Division Support Branch, Alberta Social Services and Community Health

Mr. Ian Montgomerie, Research Officer, Planning Secretariat, Alberta Manpower

Mr. William E. Novasky, Director, Health and Social Services Programs Branch, Alberta Advanced Education

Observer

Mr. Dennis Gartner, Registrar, Health Disciplines Board, Professions and Occupations Bureau